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County: Otero

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Opportunity to Comment - The Forest Service has prepared a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the South Sacramento Restoration Project on the Lincoln National Forest, Sacramento Ranger District in Otero County, New Mexico. The project is being developed under the Agriculture Act (Farm Bill) of 2014 authority as amended to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, Section 602.

The purpose of the project is to restore forest health, watershed health, and wildlife habitat on approximately 140,000 acres. This two alternatives were considered: No Action and the Proposed Action to conduct restoration activities within the project area. Under the proposed action, restoration activities would include thinning and prescribed burning; the use of herbicides to treat juniper and oak resprouts; watershed restoration in uplands; water developments for wildlife and livestock; and road management. Special use authorizations and rock pits are proposed where such uses would facilitate project implementation. Project implementation is expected to take 10 to 20 years to meet initial project objectives with additional maintenance treatments over the long term. The proposed action includes a project-specific amendment to the 1986 Lincoln National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and would follow the 2012 Planning Rule per 36 CFR 219.17 (b)(2), and per the 2012 Planning Rule substantive requirements (36 CFR 219.8 through .11). The project was developed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and with the participation of a local collaborative group.

The DEIS includes a complete description of the alternatives considered including potential environmental consequences and is available for public review on the project website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51146>. Copies of the DEIS are also available upon request at the Lincoln National Forest Supervisor's Office at 3463 Las Palomas Road in Alamogordo, or at the Sacramento Ranger District Office at 4 Lost Lodge Road in Cloudcroft. Additional information regarding this action can be obtained from: Peggy Luensmann at psluensmann@fs.fed.us or 575-434-7200.

This solicitation serves as a designated opportunity for public comment. Specific written comments (36 CFR 218.2) submitted in response to this solicitation should be within the scope of the proposed action or amendment, that have a direct relationship to the proposed action or amendment, and include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider in preparing the final EIS. The responsible official for this project is Travis Moseley, Lincoln National Forest Supervisor. Once prepared, the final EIS is and the draft decision document (record of decision) will be subject to the predecisional objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and C.

The Notice of Availability for the DEIS and proposed amendment was published in the Federal Register on Friday, March 15, 2019. Comments concerning this action will be accepted for 45 days following that date. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. The publication date in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the responsibility of those providing comments to submit them by the end of the comment period (36 CFR 218.25(a)(4)).

Comments on the DEIS and amendment may be submitted electronically on the project website -

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51146>. To submit electronic comments, select 'Comment on Project' in the 'Get Connected' box on the right side of the web page. Electronic comments can be typed directly in the web form or uploaded in any format such as plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or Acrobat (.pdf). Hardcopy comments may be submitted by mail to: Travis Moseley, c/o Peggy Luensmann, Lincoln National Forest Supervisor's Office, 3463 Las Palomas Road, Alamogordo, NM 88310; or hand delivered to the same address between the hours of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays; or faxed to: 575-434-7218.

Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or substantive formal comments on the proposed amendment during a designated public comment period will be eligible for file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by 36 CFR 218.25(a)(3) and 36 CFR 219.53 and include name, postal address, title of the project, and a signature or other verification of identity upon request. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments to have personal objection eligibility. Names and addresses of those who comment will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

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